



Representing Farmworker Women
Who Have Been Sexually Harassed —
A Best Practices Manual

Esperanza 
THE IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S LEGAL INITIATIVE

A PROJECT OF THE
SOUTHERN POVERTY
LAW CENTER
SPLC

Representing Farmworker Women Who Have Been Sexually Harassed — **A Best Practices Manual**

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Interviews were conducted with five farmworker women from different parts of the U.S. who experienced sexual harassment in the workplace. They shared their experiences, their insights, and their advice with us so that we could impart it to you. Quotes from these interviews are highlighted throughout this book. We are extremely thankful to these women for their participation in this project.

FOREWORD

Sexual violence can destroy a person's life. It causes physical and emotional pain. It steals an individual's sense of security, diminishes feelings of safety, and can lead to economic strife. Its consequences are felt far beyond the individual who is victimized — scarring families, co-workers, and communities.

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a form of sexual violence. Farmworker women in the United States, who struggle to earn decent wages and provide for their families, are particularly defenseless when their employers and supervisors use their power and control to sexually exploit, demean, frighten, and injure them.

Esperanza: The Immigrant Women's Legal Initiative of the Southern Poverty Law Center is joining with farmworker women and other advocates across the country to take action against this serious problem.

We must not tolerate this sexual violence any longer. Farmworker women — all women — have the right to work in a place that is free of all forms of violence and discrimination. Those who choose to exploit, demean and discriminate against farmworker women must be held accountable for their actions.

Esperanza means *hope* in Spanish. However, this manual was not written merely with hope. It was written by the hopeful and determined.

Thank you for joining us in this movement. Please contact us if you would like more information about the *Esperanza* National Initiative to End Workplace Sexual Violence Against Farmworker and other Low-Wage Immigrant Women (The *Esperanza* National Initiative) or this manual. We welcome your feedback and appreciate your support.

In Solidarity,
Mónica Ramírez, *Project Director*

**Esperanza: The Immigrant Women's Legal Initiative
of the Southern Poverty Law Center**



To the brave farmworker women who have spoken out against sexual violence in the workplace, thank you for your example and your courage; and to the farmworker women who continue to be afflicted by this serious problem, please know that you are not alone.

“I was afraid of my harasser. I thought he might confront my family or my husband, since my husband also worked for the same employer. I felt that the employer did not take adequate precautions. I was afraid because it was also a situation for my husband; it was not only my situation that was involved. It was difficult for me to leave my work and to try to find help. Everything was getting worse and I was full of pain and shame.”

— FARMWORKER SURVIVOR